KV FOCUS

REGISTER NOW FOR SUMMER CAMPS

A Kalamazoo Valley Community College Publication
February 2024

KalamazooVALLEY community college

COLLEGE WELCOMES STUDENTS TO NEW SCHOOL OF COSMETOLOGY AND BARBERING

Barber Training Manager Richie Rucker works with student Kelynn Kim (in chair) and Paige Caldwell.

More than 30 aspiring cosmetologists and barbers began honing their skills last month at Kalamazoo Valley's new School of Cosmetology and Barbering. The school opened in late January.

The students, all in high school, are part of Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency's (KRESA) Career Connect Career and Technical Education (CTE) system.

"With the increased student inquiries and community partners interested in filling a local need, we considered this new educational endeavor," said Paige Eagan, Ph.D., provost and vice president for instruction and student services. "Over the past decade, the college has focused on the connection of food-health-wellness and this is a reasonable next step in providing programs that could help our community positively move the needle on various social determinants of health."

The 11th and 12th grade KRESA students are completing hours toward the 1,500 required training hours in cosmetology or the 1,800 hours mandated for barbering. Tuition is covered by KRESA. Upon successful completion of this prerequisite, students will be prepared to take the Michigan State Board of Cosmetology and/or Barbering exams.

Classes, led by Program Director Aliah Wafford, are currently taught at the college's main campus building on the Texas Township Campus located at 6767 West O Ave. in Kalamazoo.

Wafford brings more than 20 years of experience as a cosmetologist, educator and salon owner to the program.

"I love the world of cosmetology and barbering," Wafford said. "Working with students and the community is a great passion of mine. I'm looking forward to providing students with the support they need to be successful in their careers."

In the spring, classes will move to their own building on campus. The nearly 10,000-square-foot lab space will include the cosmetology school's salon and spa and the barbering school's barbershop. Both spaces will eventually offer discounted services to the community so students can sharpen their skills.

Enrollment for the Fall 2024 semester will expand to include anyone in the community interested in a career in hair, nail and skin care. The college will offer non-credit, employer recognized credentials that include cosmetology and barbering with the possibility to build upon these certifications to earn an Associate of Applied Science degree in salon management* or an Associate of Applied Science degree in business. Registration opens the week of April 1.

For more information, visit **www.kvcc.edu/haircare**.

* Based on approval from the state of Michigan and Higher Learning Commission.

Program Director Aliah Wafford instructs Leah Hines (standing) and Ryanna Roberston.

BE OUR GUEST – TAKE SUMMER CLASSES AT KALAMAZOO VALLEY

Area students currently studying at four-year institutions who are looking to get ahead on required classes and save money are encouraged to apply for summer classes as guest students at Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

"Students who are enrolled in other colleges and universities often return home for the summer and Kalamazoo Valley makes becoming a guest student here easy; students only need to complete an online Kalamazoo Valley application and identify themselves as a guest student," said Kalamazoo Valley's Director of Admissions, Registration and Records Sarah Hubbell.

These students will receive an acceptance letter within one week containing the information they need to register for classes through the college's self-service online portal. Tuition bills are available online and payment can be made online, on campus or by mail. To apply, students should visit **www.kvcc.edu/apply**.

Before enrolling, guest students should consult with their current college or university to ensure that the classes they take at Kalamazoo Valley will be accepted as transfer credit. Once they have completed coursework, students need to submit a request to have an official transcript sent back to their primary institution.

According to Director of Recruitment and Outreach Ryan St. John, the benefits of taking summer classes at Kalamazoo Valley are numerous. "Students stay on track for graduation or get ahead in their program while they are home for the summer. Plus, affordable tuition and small class sizes make this an attractive option for many students."

Guest students are not alone in benefiting from summer classes. "Many of our community college students enroll in summer semester classes to keep pace to complete their programs in a timely manner," said Dean of Liberal Arts Billy Reynolds. "Several Kalamazoo Valley programs of study include opportunities to fast-forward degree completion and transfer options by including summer classes."

Student Peyton Hughes in the Student Commons at the Texas Township Campus

Registration opens the week of March 4. Summer semester begins Monday, May 6 with classes starting May 6, May 20 and June 25. A complete list of summer semester classes is available at **www.kvcc.edu/schedule**.

Kalamazoo Valley Community College
6767 West O Avenue, PO Box 4070
Kalamazoo, MI 49003-4070

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KalamazooVALLEY FOODWAYS symposium
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Stay tuned at www.kalamazoofoodways.org

ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS!
Apply by March 1 for the $2,000 Kalamazoo Valley Merit Scholarship!
Visit **www.kvcc.edu/merit**

ALUMNA LEENA MERGEN
LOVES TEACHING OTHERS ABOUT HEALTHY EATING

Leena Mergen, Kalamazoo Valley alumna

Portage native Leena Mergen, 51, has worked in restaurants since she was 16, but knew that she needed an education to truly feel secure in the culinary workforce. She's now employed at Kalamazoo Valley Community College as a support specialist with the community culinary and nutrition program where she puts her training to work helping others.

Mergen's first job was washing dishes at Sunset Bowling Lanes in Vicksburg. From there, she moved up to working as a line cook and baker at the Black Swan restaurant. At the age of 23, she moved to Pennsylvania to work in a family member's inn. What was supposed to be a six-month assignment turned into 10 years and a love story that resulted in her marriage to Steve Head, the inn's sous chef.

Head died in a car accident when the couple's daughter was four and son was four months old. The children are now both college aged. Mergen made ends meet by cleaning houses when her children were young. Still, she wanted more stability. "I started to have a lot of fear about my future – straight up fear for my future," Mergen said. "I saw education as my only way to break out of my situation. I felt like I was unemployable."

When her mother sent her an article about Kalamazoo Valley opening a culinary school, she texted a friend in California who promptly sent her the link to enroll. Mergen credits counselor Chris Stroven with helping her register for classes and prepare to become a college student. "He was wonderful," Mergen explained. "He guided me and was so great. I was a nervous wreck. I had never worked with a computer."

She overcame her fears, persevered as a college student and graduated in December 2019 with a 3.97 GPA and nearly perfect attendance. An internship with the college's Community Culinary and Nutrition Program Coordinator and Chef Lizzie Luchsinger led to her current position.

"The culinary field itself had catapulted in the time that I was home with my kids," Mergen said. "Culinary was all I'd ever known and I thought the only jobs were in restaurants. I found community culinary and nutrition and was opened to a whole new world. I still pinch myself sometimes at how far I've come. I really can't imagine where I'd be if I hadn't pushed myself."

Leena Mergen assisted Chef Noel Corwin during a seasonal produce class featuring roasted leek panzanella. As a part of the community culinary and nutrition team, she preps food, cooks and helps with training sessions.

Not only is she pleased with her accomplishments, but her children and partner are also proud of her. "I'm so happy I did it at a time when my children saw the struggle," Mergen said. "They are so proud of me. We all have moments when we wish we'd done better, but now they've seen me at my best. It's been quite a journey."

Mergen's job involves helping plan programs, putting on community culinary classes and food demonstrations and serving the 80 families who are participating in the Learning Kitchen program. "I never saw myself in a community education role, but I love being in a position where I can help others," she said. "There are so many great things about my job – we get to cook, we get to teach, we get to teach nutrition to people who need it. I'm learning as I go – so many of these programs continue to educate."

Mergen said she loves collaborating with co-workers, including those from different departments. She recently taught a sold-out fairy garden class at the Food Innovation Center. She's also grateful for all of the support and encouragement she has received from faculty and colleagues. "I really love my job and I'm so very proud and grateful to work for Kalamazoo Valley Community College."

Although she had years of restaurant experience prior to receiving formal training, Mergen is pleased to have taken her skills to a new level. "I think education brings a lot of traditional skills. Even though I worked in kitchens for many years, culinary school is where I learned to properly hold a knife. There are all kinds of details like that. Education brings professionalism to the career. For me, it's very worthwhile."

Mergen would encourage anyone to enroll in college classes. "Once you're in the door at Kalamazoo Valley, so many other doors are opened," she said. "I can't say enough about all of the support I've received."

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE Kalamazoo VALLEY Museum

UPCOMING EXHIBITS

Check out these offerings at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum, located at 230 N. Rose St. in downtown Kalamazoo. Admission is free to the exhibits and the museum. Hours are Tuesday to Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday, from noon to 4 p.m.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A HOMETOWN WRITER NOW - JUNE 30

Nationally acclaimed author and Comstock Township native Bonnie Jo Campbell shares her history and writing inspirations in a mini exhibit.

SKIN: LIVING ARMOR, EVOLVING IDENTITY FEB. 10 - JUNE 2

Explore the shape-shifting, color-changing and adaptable nature of skin and the technological innovations it inspires.

THE QUESTIONEERS: READ. QUESTION. THINK. PLAY! JUNE 15 - SEPT. 1

Questions are posed, challenges identified and problem-solving begins in this traveling exhibit from The DuPage Children's Museum.

MYSTERY AND BENEVOLENCE: MASONIC & ODD FELLOWS SEPT. 28, 2024 - JAN. 5, 2025

Eighty carvings, sculptures, textiles and regalia bring to light the histories, symbolism and values of the Masons and Independent Order of the Odd Fellows.

EXHIBIT CELEBRATES
STATE HOSPITAL'S 165-YEAR HISTORY

Nurses and orderlies at the State Hospital in an undated historical photo

Did you know that Michigan's longest-operating mental hospital is in Kalamazoo? Learn the fascinating history of the Kalamazoo Regional Psychiatric Hospital at a new exhibit at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum on display from Feb. 3, 2024 through Jan. 19, 2025.

"Kalamazoo State Hospital: 165 Years of Psychiatric Care" examines the history of its patients, employees and buildings on its Oakland Drive campus. The exhibit features a range of items, from life-size versions of historical photos to patient artwork and original furniture, such as rocking and dining-room chairs.

Expect recreations of patient and employee sleeping quarters; at one time, employees were required to sleep at the hospital. There will also be a copy of a book written by a patient about her experience at the facility, plus mental health resources and several patient case studies that are being used with their families' permission.

Starting in 1848, the state legislature saw the need for addressing the mental health of its people and began taking steps toward creating the first mental hospital overseen by the state. One hundred and sixty-five years later, the Kalamazoo Regional Psychiatric Hospital still operates on the original location where the first hospital opened in 1859. Throughout its history, several innovative programs began, such as a training school for nurses specializing in psychiatric care and an occupational therapy program in partnership with Western Michigan University.

The hospital also utilized several hundred acres of surrounding farmland for diversified farming, such as cattle for milking, fruit orchards and vegetable gardens. This was accomplished by the implementation of the colony farm system, which established a "colony" made up of numerous cottages having a capacity of 30 patients.

The resulting Colony Farm was believed to have a curative effect on patients by keeping their bodies and minds active toward a common goal.

Admission is free to the exhibit and the museum. Visit **kalamazoomuseum.org** for more information. The Kalamazoo Valley Museum is operated by Kalamazoo Valley Community College and is governed by its Board of Trustees.

A yesteryear glimpse of the interior of the State Hospital

The water tower at the State Hospital

From left to right: Michigan Sen. Sean McCann, Sen. Sarah E. Anthony, Appropriations Chair, L. Marshall Washington, Ph.D., Kalamazoo Valley Community College President, and State Rep. Julie Rogers.

A NEW ERA FOR INDUSTRIAL TRADES EDUCATION

Exciting changes are coming to the skilled trades facilities at Kalamazoo Valley Community College. The college recently received a state appropriation of $19.5 million to renovate its skilled trades wing at the Texas Township Campus.

These funds, along with an additional $19.5 million match that the college plans to raise from multiple sources, will enable Kalamazoo Valley to meet the region's changing technology needs and the ever-growing demand for trained workers in the skilled trades.

In addition to renovating its 68,000-square-foot wing, the college plans to add a 20,000-square-foot expansion to accommodate a new automotive program. This expansion will provide new opportunities for program offerings, such as hybrid and electric vehicle technology training, renewable energy storage systems and autonomous vehicle diagnostics and repair. The continued growth in electric vehicles is increasing the need for workers skilled in computer programming, engineering, installation and repair. The new space will better equip Kalamazoo Valley to offer customized training for automotive employers who are looking to provide industry-recognized credentials for their staff.

In the renovated wing, the college will increase its footprint in the industrial trades, growing the college's ability to meet the need in these fields. This project will also create dedicated space for an energy systems program that is starting this semester as well for additional academic offerings in additive manufacturing.

"With this expansion, Kalamazoo Valley will be even better equipped to provide the training needed to help our communities thrive," said L. Marshall Washington, Ph.D., college president. "The college currently has more than 115 companies sponsoring over 500 apprentices in 60 different customized technical programs, including electrical, HVAC and engineering design and manufacturing technologies. We need these renovated and new spaces to meet the needs of our local businesses."

The renovation will also help Kalamazoo Valley embrace its Board of Trustees' sustainability goal. For all initiatives, the college seeks the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED certification as a target standard. The new classrooms will demonstrate Kalamazoo Valley's commitment to environmental and energy stewardship.

The campaign to raise the $19.5 million in matching funds for this cutting-edge construction will begin later this year.

"This ambitious project is the next chapter in the history of Kalamazoo Valley's service to our community," said Alisha Siebers, associate vice president for college advancement and executive director of the KVCC Foundation. "The region formed this public college in 1966 to train our workforce and the college has evolved over the years to maintain cutting-edge instruction for in-demand careers and for transfer to four-year universities. We look forward to working with the entire community to raise the funds needed to provide the best education for the next generation of skilled workers."

For more information and ways you can help, contact Siebers at asiebers@kvcc.edu or 269.488.4821.

Instructor Brian Murray (l) and student Matthew Maka (r)

MICHIGAN RECONNECT EXPANDS - NOW AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS AGES 21-24

Lynn Grammel, recruitment and outreach coordinator, works with student Faith Nyanjui

Adults ages 21 to 24 now have the opportunity to earn a tuition-free degree or certificate through the Michigan Reconnect Expansion at Kalamazoo Valley.

Launched in 2021, Michigan Reconnect pays the remaining balance of in-district tuition and mandatory fees after other state and federal financial aid have been applied. Students who attend out-of-district community colleges will receive a large tuition discount. It's designed specifically for eligible adults who want to start – or finish – an associate degree or skills certificate. To date, more than 132,000 Michiganders have applied to the program, with more than 27,000 people enrolling and taking classes in community colleges. More than 1,000 students have utilized the scholarship at Kalamazoo Valley.

For a limited time, Michigan residents, including those already enrolled in a community college and potential students ages 21 to 24 who have not yet earned a college degree, can apply for Michigan Reconnect. Eligible Michigan residents 25 and older may still enroll as part of the original Michigan Reconnect program.

"This is a great opportunity for anyone who was thinking about starting or returning to school," said Lynn Grammel, recruitment and outreach coordinator for adult learners at Kalamazoo Valley. "With Michigan Reconnect, you can make your educational dreams a reality."

Grammel, who works specifically with adult students, is available to assist anyone interested in using Michigan Reconnect at Kalamazoo Valley.

To be eligible for the Michigan Reconnect Expansion, students must be at least 21 years of age and not more than 24 years of age between Oct. 1, 2023 and Dec. 31, 2024.

Students must also have completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), have earned a high school diploma or equivalent (GED) or certificate of completion, and have lived in Michigan for at least a year and enroll in classes by the Fall 2024 semester.

The application window closes Friday, Nov. 15, 2024, at 11:59 p.m. EST. Learn more and apply at **www.kvcc.edu/reconnect** or contact Grammel at lgrammel@kvcc.edu.

Marilyn J. Schlack Culinary and Allied Health Building,
418 E. Walnut Street, in downtown Kalamazoo.

TAPS on TUESDAY

JAN. 16 - APRIL 16* | 5 - 7 P.M.
418 RESTAURANT

The 418 Restaurant is hosting its weekly student-made food and beer pairing event.

*Except March 12.

JOIN THE NATION'S LEADING TRAINING PROGRAM FOR WIND TURBINE TECHNICIANS

The Wind Turbine Technician Academy at Kalamazoo Valley Community College provides a fast track to jobs that are in demand and pay high wages.

THE NEXT ACADEMY BEGINS ON JULY 5

Find out more:
269.353.1566
careeracademies@kvcc.edu
www.kvcc.edu/academics/wind/

2024 KALAMAZOO VALLEY YOUTH

SUMMER CAMPS

SCAN FOR REGISTRATION AND MORE INFORMATION

Looking for some summer fun? Explore Kalamazoo Valley's wide variety of youth summer camps. From athletics to hands-on learning, there's plenty at Kalamazoo Valley to keep kids busy all summer long!

VOLLEYBALL CAMP

JUNE 17 - 20 | 9 A.M. - 4 P.M.
Girls entering grades 6 - 8 | 9 a.m. - noon
Girls entering grades 9 - 12 | 1 - 4 p.m.
Equipment needed: Gym shoes, socks, shorts, knee pads, jersey or T-shirt and labeled water bottle or thermos.
Camp fee: $115 through May 20. $140 for registrations received after May 20. Registration closes June 10.

GIRLS BASKETBALL CAMP

JUNE 24 - 27 | 9 A.M. - 4 P.M.
Girls entering grades 6 - 8 | 9 a.m. - noon
Girls entering grades 9 - 12 | 1 - 4 p.m.
Equipment needed: Gym shoes, socks, shorts, jersey or T-shirt and labeled water bottle or thermos.
Camp fee: $115 through May 27. $140 for registrations received after May 27. Registration closes June 17.

BOYS BASKETBALL CAMP

SESSION 1:
JULY 8 - 11 | 9 A.M. - 4 P.M.
Boys entering grades 6 - 8 | 9 a.m. - noon
Boys entering grades 9 -12 | 1 - 4 p.m.
Equipment needed: Gym shoes, socks, shorts, jersey or T-shirt and labeled water bottle or thermos.
Camp fee: $115 through June 10. $140 for registrations received after June 10. Registration closes July 1.

SESSION 2:
JULY 15 - 18 | 9 A.M. - 4 P.M.
Boys entering grades 6 - 8 | 9 a.m. - noon
Boys entering grades 9 -12 | 1 - 4 p.m.
Equipment needed: Gym shoes, socks, shorts, jersey or T-shirt and labeled water bottle or thermos.
Camp fee: $115 through June 17. $140 for registrations received after June 17. Registration closes July 8.

SOFTBALL CAMP

JULY 22 - 25 | 9 A.M. - 4 P.M.
Girls entering grades 6 - 8 | 9 a.m. - noon
Girls entering grades 9 - 12 | 1 - 4 p.m.
Equipment needed: All campers should arrive dressed to play each day with a softball glove, bat, helmet, cleats and labeled water bottle or thermos.
Camp fee: $115 through June 24. $140 for registrations after June 24. Registration closes July 15.

JULY 29 - 30 | 9 A.M. - NOON
Girls entering grades 3 - 5
Equipment needed: All campers should arrive dressed to play each day with a softball glove, bat, helmet, cleats and labeled water bottle or thermos.
Camp fee: $60 through July 1. $85 for registrations after July 1. Registration closes July 22.

VOLLEYBALL HIGH SCHOOL TEAM CAMP

JUNE 27, JULY 11, 18 & 25 | 7 - 9 P.M.
High school teams only.
Equipment needed: Gym shoes, socks, shorts, knee pads, jersey or T-shirt and labeled water bottle or thermos.
Team fee: $250. No registration deadline.

All camps are held at the Texas Township Campus. A limited number of scholarships are available. Contact Athletic Director Russ Panico at rpanico@kvcc.edu or 269.488.4393.

Cancellation Policy: Campers may cancel or request a refund (less a $25 administrative fee) up to seven days before their camp begins. No refunds will be given after this deadline.

Keep your kids sharp this summer with these hands-on learning experiences! All educational summer camps are for youths entering grades six through eight.

EXPLORE YOUR FUTURE

JUNE 10 - 13 | 8:30 A.M. - 3 P.M. | $175
JUNE 24 - 27 | 8:30 A.M. - 3 P.M. | $175
JULY 15 - 18 | 8:30 A.M. - 3 P.M. | $175
JULY 22 - 25 | 8:30 A.M. - 3 P.M. | $175
ALL LOCATED AT ANNA WHITTEN HALL | ROOM 128
Campers will experience math, science, animation, machining/manufacturing, horticulture and culinary arts. Students are provided a light breakfast, lunch, snacks and lots of Kalamazoo Valley swag. They will explore all four of our campus locations and transportation is provided to the Texas Township Campus during the week.

COMIC & MANGA AND GRAPHIC NOVEL CAMP

JULY 8 - 11 | 9 A.M. - NOON | $125
CENTER FOR NEW MEDIA | ROOM 020
Take your love of comics and manga to the next level as you design your own book. Learn professional drawing and inking techniques while pushing your storytelling skills to their full potential.

URBAN FARM EXPLORERS

JULY 8 - 11 | 8 A.M. - NOON | $125
FOOD INNOVATION CENTER
See what it takes to grow, harvest and sample foods grown in our five-acre urban garden. Students will have the opportunity to explore our greenhouse, hoop houses and outdoor growing spaces, create salsa (depending on the seasonal availability of the produce), enjoy sampling local fresh produce and create art using botanicals.

LEGO CREATION & STOP MOTION CAMP

JULY 22 - 25 | 9 A.M. - NOON | $125
CENTER FOR NEW MEDIA | ROOM 020
LEGO! Camera! Action! Create your very own stop-action movie. Campers will design, build and communicate using Lego bricks. This camp offers participants the opportunity to explore STEAM education and activities.

All camps include a $25 non-refundable deposit fee. A limited number of scholarships are available. Please contact Kevin Lavender, Jr. at klavender@kvcc.edu or 269.488.4509.

FREE

SPECIAL SUMMER MUSEUM EXHIBIT - THE QUESTIONEERS: READ. QUESTION. THINK. PLAY!

PUBLIC HOURS: TUESDAY - SATURDAY 10 A.M. - 4 P.M. AND SUNDAY NOON - 4 P.M.
JUNE 15 - SEPT. 1 | KALAMAZOO VALLEY MUSEUM
A great activity for children with their adults. Based on the best-selling children's book series by Andrea Beaty and illustrated by David Roberts, the hands-on exhibit activities celebrate science, technology, engineering, art, math, perseverance and passion. Like the book characters Iggy Peck, Rosie Revere, Ada Twist, Aaron Slater and Sofia Valdez, every budding architect, engineer, scientist, artist and leader will find inspiration to solve everyday mysteries and to think more critically about their world. Most importantly, participants will learn that despite inevitable challenges, they should always continue to "Read. Question. Think." — and never give up on their dreams. Related special events for children and their adults will be offered throughout the summer. Check the museum's website for dates, times and details at **www.kalamazoomuseum.org**.

COMMUNITY CULINARY
LIFE ENRICHMENT CLASSES

The Community and Continuing Education department at Kalamazoo Valley Community College provides learning opportunities to community members of all ages. These non-credit classes emphasize personal enrichment, professional development and community outreach.

The following classes are hosted at the Food Innovation Center, 224 E. Crosstown Parkway. Go to **www.campusce.net/kvcccommunity** and click on Sustainable Foods, Farm & Garden to register or scan the QR code.

BEEKEEPING 101
TUESDAYS, MARCH 5 - APRIL 9 | 6 - 8 P.M. | $140
This is the first course of this three-part beekeeping series and will teach about introductory bee biology, needed equipment, apiary preparation, options for obtaining bees and how to get them into their new home. Hybrid format. Information about virtual and in-person sessions will be sent to participants via email.

VISIBLE MENDING
THURSDAYS, MARCH 7 - APRIL 11 | 6 - 8 P.M. | $140
Transform your holey clothing into a work of slow fashion art. If you can thread a needle and sew on a button, you've got the skills you need. Learn to mend socks, jeans and other pants, shirts and other types of clothing using techniques of weaving, embroidery, knitting and more.

AT HOME HYDROPONICS
SATURDAY, MARCH 23 | 10 A.M. - 1 P.M. | $30
Learn the basics of home hydroponics, including light needs, water pH, growing mediums and building and operating your own small-scale setup. Participants will leave with resources for purchasing table-top gardens, plans for DIY setups and starter plants or seeds.

MUSHROOM CULTIVATION
WEDNESDAYS, MARCH 6 - 27 | 6 - 8 P.M. | $140
Learn to grow your own oyster, shiitake, winecaps and other gourmet mushrooms from locally available materials. Students will learn how to procure substrates and create good environments for mushroom growth. Students take home inoculated mushroom media at the end of each session.

HOME LANDSCAPE DESIGN
MONDAYS, MARCH 11 - 25 | 6 - 8 P.M. | $40
Participants will learn to design, install and maintain landscaping and gardens for various needs and spaces. By selecting plants that match local climate, soil and light exposure, participants will gain insight on how to plan and implement low maintenance gardens.

RAIN BARREL WORKSHOP
SATURDAY, MAY 18 | 10 A.M. - NOON | $75
Explore the benefits of using rain barrels and construct a rain barrel to take home. Participants will use repurposed plastic 55-gallon food grade blue barrels. Safety glasses, barrels and all required parts for constructing the rain barrels are included in the program cost. Presented by the Kalamazoo Conservation District (KDC), an independent county-level resource assisting Kalamazoo County residents in resolving natural resource concerns.

GARDENS FOR SMALL SPACES
MONDAYS, APRIL 1 - 15 | 6 - 8 P.M. | $40
This class will give you an overview of considerations when planning a small garden, and how to put the plan into action. Essential design basics with examples of garden styles will be demonstrated.

GARDENING WITH NATIVE PLANTS MADE EASY
SATURDAY, APRIL 13 | 10 A.M. - 1 P.M. | $30
Learn about the necessary role native plants play in creating local ecosystems and how to garden for wildlife in a space of any size. Participants will learn different germination methods for seed starting and make their own kit to take home.

BUILD A NATIVE BEE HOTEL
SATURDAY, APRIL 20 | 10 A.M. - 1 P.M. | $45
Tunnel nesting bees are important pollinators for fruits and vegetables. Participants will learn how to build and manage a bee hotel to support their local tunnel nesting bees. Students will take home a bee hotel at the end of the class.

URBAN HOMESTEADING
WEDNESDAYS, APRIL 24 - MAY 29 | 6 - 8 P.M. | $140
Learn about making simple indoor and outdoor gardens, planting perennial food crops, preserving and fermenting food, raising urban livestock, cheese making, composting and mushroom cultivation. This class is for all ages and provides instruction for all scales of land access.

SEED STEWARDSHIP: GARDEN DESIGN FOR FOOD AND SEED
SATURDAY, APRIL 27 | 10 A.M. - 1 P.M. | $40
Whether you are tending a half-acre, a few raised beds or some pots on your patio, you can learn to design your garden to produce an abundant yield of food and viable seeds for planting next year. Examine a variety of garden designs and help plant the seed garden at the Food Innovation Center.

BEEKEEPING 102
TUESDAYS, APRIL 30 - JUNE 4 | 6 - 8 P.M. | $140
This course is the second in the three-part beekeeping series. Weather permitting, hands-on learning in the Food Innovation Center's apiary is planned for each week, where students will evaluate hive strength, health and how to support growing colonies. Classroom review will cover swarming, splits and integrated pest management and a further focus on biology through the season and keeping bees in Southwest Michigan.

GARDEN GUARDIANS: HOW INSECTS KEEP PESTS OUT OF THE GARDEN
SATURDAY, MAY 4 | 10 A.M. - NOON | $30
Learn how beneficial insects and vertebrates can help protect plants from pests. Take an up close and personal look at lacewings, lady beetles, "true bugs," mantids and other insects that serve as predators of aphids, thrips and caterpillars. Participants will take home a packet of seeds for plants that will help attract predators to their gardens.

BAT WALK
FRIDAY, MAY 17 | 8:30 - 9:30 P.M. | $15
FRIDAY, JUNE 7 | 8:30 - 9:30 P.M. | $15
LOCATION: WILL BE COMMUNICATED VIA EMAIL
Join us for an evening walk to learn more about Michigan's native and migratory bat species and their critical role in a functioning ecosystem. Participants will observe bats in real-time using a portable bat detector.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT FOR THE HOME GARDEN
THURSDAYS, MAY 16 - 30 | 6 - 8 P.M. | $60
Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a practical six-step strategy used in gardens big and small to monitor and manage insects, diseases and other pests. IPM helps promote ecosystem balance, increases treatment success and saves time and money. The sessions will cover how to identify garden pests, determine treatments and increase a garden's resilience to pests. Participants will receive seeds for plants that will attract beneficial insects, a hand lens and an IPM for the Home Garden reference manual.

CREATE A TRADITIONAL FAIRY GARDEN
SATURDAY, JUNE 1 | 10 A.M. - 1 P.M. | $70
Especially popular in Ireland, fairy gardens are said to serve as passageways that enable fairies to join the human world. They're also an excellent way to add whimsy and mystery to your garden. Learn to design and create your own traditional fairy garden using natural items like cones, acorns and twigs. Students will be provided with a pot, soil, gravel, plants and items to make fairy gardens come to life.

TOUR OF THE FOOD INNOVATION CENTER
SATURDAY, MARCH 23 | 1:15 - 2:30 P.M. | FREE
SATURDAY, MAY 4 | 1:15 - 2:30 P.M. | FREE
ValleyHUB is a farm, food hub and education center based at the Food Innovation Center at Kalamazoo Valley Community College. The urban farm at ValleyHUB showcases a range of sustainable agricultural practices. The five-acre site includes an indoor grow room, heated greenhouse, outdoor raised beds and two passive solar hoophouses. It is a licensed food processing facility equipped to produce fresh-cut fruits and vegetables. On these free tours, explore the site and learn about programs and practices.

UPCOMING CORPORATE TRAINING CLASSES

Corporate training classes take place at Kalamazoo Valley's Groves Campus, 7107 Elm Valley Drive, Kalamazoo, 49009, unless otherwise noted. Go to **www.campusce.net/kvcccommunity** and click on Personal & Professional Development to register or contact Madeline Isch, associate director of corporate training at misch0311@kvcc.edu or 269.353.1250 for more information.

LEADERSHIP COACHING ON THE FRONT LINE
THURSDAYS | FEB. 29 - MARCH 21 | 8 A.M. - NOON | $750
This course will help leaders improve in their evolving roles and learn to build leadership skills through the use of feedback, communication and coaching. Designed for anyone in a supervisory role and the direct managers who support them.

LEADERSHIP BEYOND THE FRONT LINE: ENGAGING OTHERS
TUESDAYS | MARCH 5 & 12 | 8 A.M. - 5 P.M. | $750
Participants will have the opportunity to enhance and improve their leadership skills and to build on the tools and strategies offered in Leadership: Coaching on the Front Line. Prerequisite: previously attending Leadership: Coaching on the Front Line or having leadership experience.

GUIDING HUMAN PERFORMANCE
FRIDAY, MARCH 8 | 8 A.M. - NOON | $380
This workshop examines five areas of performance: resources, expectations, consequences, feedback and knowledge. Leaders will learn to discern poor performance from poor habits and determine which area they should focus on to improve performance.

FEEDBACK FUNDAMENTALS
FRIDAY, MARCH 15 | 8 A.M. - NOON | $380
Feedback isn't the same as criticism. Once people understand that feedback is valuable, useful information, real performance improvement begins. Participants will learn to use feedback to enhance job performance and ensure success.

MANAGING FROM THE MIDDLE
FRIDAY, MARCH 22 | 10:30 A.M. - 2:30 P.M. | $210
In this course, we will discuss what it takes to be an effective middle manager and reveal best practices to help ensure success. Topics include:
- What it means to be a middle manager
- Positioning your team for success
- Managing for performance

MIOSHA PART 21 POWERED INDUSTRIAL TRUCKS: WHAT EVERY TRAINER AND OPERATOR MUST KNOW
THURSDAY, APRIL 4 | 9 A.M. – 4 P.M. | $130
This course covers the training and operating requirements for powered industrial trucks in general industry workplaces. Safety and occupational health topics are extensively reviewed. Resources and sample documents will be provided to assist attendees with implementing a powered industrial truck program in their workplace.

EARLY/MIDDLE COLLEGE
OFFERS FAST TRACK TO FREE DEGREE

"I have so many plans and aspirations for my life, and I really do feel like the program helps me get closer to those goals. I think more students should enroll, even if they don't know what degree they want. It was useful in helping me figure out what I wanted to do."

This spring, 19-year-old Trevor Watts will graduate high school while celebrating the completion of a tuition-free associate degree from Kalamazoo Valley Community College. Watts credits the college's Early/Middle College program for making this opportunity possible.

The Loy Norrix High School student was captain of the men's track team, homecoming king and part of the high school's Black Student Union. Watts also enjoys volleyball club and has had a robust high school experience full of other activities while balancing college classes at Kalamazoo Valley.

Through Kalamazoo Valley's Early/Middle College program, high school students can complete tuition-free college-level courses. Those enrolled attend a fifth year of high school and postpone graduation while they take classes at the college. Depending on their program of study and educational goals, students are eligible to earn a high school diploma and up to an associate degree upon completion.

"Early/Middle College helps me stand out and gives me a head start, "Watts explained. "I have so many plans and aspirations for my life, and I really do feel like the program helps me get closer to those goals. I think more students should enroll, even if they don't know what degree they want. It was useful in helping me figure out what I wanted to do."

After graduation, Watts plans to transfer to the University of Michigan to pursue degrees in architecture and real estate, and hopes to take part in environmental architecture research and eventually enroll at Howard University for doctorate studies.

"Early/Middle College at Kalamazoo Valley continues to be a great conduit for high school students to discover, focus, experience and achieve at the collegiate level," said Kevin Lavender Jr., Kalamazoo Valley interim director of Early/Middle College. "It is a tremendous honor to serve in this role and collaboratively support the emerging generations of leaders and influencers."

Through the program, tuition and fees are paid by the local school district up to the state-allocated maximum. Students take courses at Kalamazoo Valley campuses but may also take Kalamazoo Valley courses at their high school (in certain school districts). There are currently more than 100 Early/Middle College programs in Michigan.

The Gull Lake, Kalamazoo, Galesburg-Augusta, Parchment, Portage, Schoolcraft, Vicksburg and Climax-Scotts school districts, as well as the Van Buren Technology Center, participate in the college's program. More than 470 students are currently enrolled.

Students apply through their local district prior to applying to Kalamazoo Valley. To learn more about Early/Middle College at Kalamazoo Valley, email Lavender at klavender@kvcc.edu or scan QR code below.

Trevor Watts, Early/Middle College student

COLLEGE PREPARES
FOR REACCREDITATION

Higher Learning Commission

Kalamazoo Valley Community College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). The HLC is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and its role is to validate the quality of an institution's academic programs at all degree levels, whether delivered on site, online or otherwise.

Institutional accreditation also examines the quality of the institution beyond its academic offerings and evaluates the institution as a whole, including the soundness of its governance and administration, adherence to mission, the sustainability of its finances and the sufficiency of its resources.

In order to remain accredited, the college undergoes a reaccreditation cycle every 10 years. In 2026, Kalamazoo Valley will complete a Comprehensive Evaluation which involves three parts: a written Assurance Argument, a Federal Compliance Review and a visit by a group of peer reviewers from other institutions. The on-site visit will take place March 16 - 17, 2026.

Prior to the visit, the college will submit an in-depth self-study that addresses the Higher Learning Commission's Criteria for Accreditation. This process of self-evaluation contributes to continual improvement and takes place through HLC Criterion Teams made up of faculty, staff and administrators.

"The reaccreditation process provides an excellent opportunity for continual improvement and to reflect on all of the good work the college has accomplished," said L. Marshall Washington, Ph.D., college president.

Preparation for the reaccreditation visit will continue over the next two years leading up to the site visit. To learn more about Kalamazoo Valley's process and accreditation, visit **kvcc.edu/about/hlc-reaccreditation.html**. Project updates will continue to be posted. To learn more about the Higher Learning Commission, visit **www.hlcomission.org**.

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KV Focus is a publication of Kalamazoo Valley Community College. Questions about the publication may be directed to the college Marketing Department at 269.488.4821.

It is the policy of Kalamazoo Valley Community College not to discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability, height, weight, or marital status in its programs, services, employment or activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Vice President of Campus Planning and Operations, 6767 West O Avenue, P.O. Box 4070, Kalamazoo, MI 49003-4070, 269.488.4434.

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